

Message Text

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13

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2387

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 15082

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ET

SUBJECT: SURVIVAL PROSPECTS OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT

1. WE HAVE NOT CHANGED THE BASIC ASSESSMENT WHICH WE MADE IN AUGUST (ADDIS 9530) THAT THERE IS LIKELY TO BE POLITICAL INSTABILITY FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME IN ETHIOPIA BECAUSE NO NATIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTION OF TESTED STRENGTH EXISTS. MOREOVER, WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THE POWER CENTER IN THE GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE A YEAR FROM NOW IS STILL A 120-MEMBER DIRG. SUCH A GROUP IS SO INHERENTLY UNSUITABLE AS A SUPREME EXECUTIVE ORGAN THAT ITS LONGEVITY MUST BE CONSIDERED HIGHLY DOUBTFUL, AND THE RECORD OF THE DIRG TO DATE WITH REGARD TO POLICY DECISIONS OF A CONSTRUCTIVE NATURE HAS PROVIDED NO EVIDENCE TO CONTRADICT THIS THEORETICAL CONCLUSION.

2. THIS IS NOT TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT A SIGNIFICANT SECTION OF THE PRESENT DIRG WILL NOT BE MAKING POLICY A YEAR FROM NOW, ALBEIT IN ALL LIKELIHOOD WITH SOME INTERVENING CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE VISIBLE RECORD SINCE THE NOVEMBER 23 EXECUTIONS OF COMPLIANCE WITH DECISIONS AND DIRECTIVES ISSUED BY THE DIRG SUGGESTS THAT ITS AUTHORITY IS UNCHALLENGED AT THE PRESENT TIME AND THAT IT HAS SUCCESSFULLY ESCAPED THE POSSIBILITY OF AN IMMEDIATE MILITARY COUP D'ETAT IN REACTION TO THE ELIMINATION OF GENERAL AMAN AND THE EXECUTIONS OF 59 POLITICAL PRISONERS. THE POSSIBILITY OF A MILITARY COUP IN THE

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WEEKS AHEAD CANNOT YET BE EXCLUDED, BUT WE SEE NO INDICATIONS

THAT SUCH A COUP WILL BE UNDERTAKEN, MUCH LESS THAT IT WILL BE SUCCESSFUL. THE POSSIBILITY OF A SERIOUS CIVIL REVOLT IN ONE OR MORE ETHIOPIAN PROVINCES WILL ADMITTEDLY REMAIN A REAL ONE FOR SOME TIME, AT LEAST UNTIL THE NATURE OF THE LAND REFORM DECISION BECOMES CLEAR. NEVERTHELESS, THE POSSIBILITY THAT A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE PRESENT DIRG WILL REMAIN IN POWER FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME IN THE FUTURE POSSESSES A HIGHER DEGREE OF PROBABILITY THAN MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVED IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF NOVEMBER 23.

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